

You Can Choose Your Family

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You Can Choose Your Family

by [ifisoundsordid](#)

Summary

Ritsuka tells his parents about his and Mafuyu's relationship. It gets a bit messy, but he's okay <3

This is the next part of my ongoing series but this can also be read as a one-shot. As always though, I think it makes the story more interesting to read it as part of the series. I'm slow burning this character development.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“Yayoi...”

“What?” There was nothing out of the ordinary with Yayoi’s tone, the usual impatient dismissive voice she reserves for her younger brother. But Ritsuka was feeling quite on edge this evening, so it felt like a slap in the face.

“...whatever. Never mind.” He replies, immediately defensive and turning to walk out of the room again. This was a bad idea anyway.

“Oi...” she calls after him, but he doesn’t stop walking, “Rikka! Wait.”

He stops this time but doesn’t turn around.

“What’s going on?” Her tone is a lot softer now, mainly because everything about Ritsuka’s demeanour is screaming that something’s wrong.

He clenches his fists and turns and sees that Yayoi has sat up from her previous posture of sprawled across the couch, so he reluctantly goes over and sits next to her. She looks unnervingly concerned. Still, he remains silent, searching for the words to say.

“Are you gonna tell me?”

“I’m trying! Give me a second.”

“Is it about Mafuyu? Are you fighting again?”

“No! I mean...it’s kind of about Mafuyu? But not really? But we’re not fighting! We’re...good...at the moment.”

“Oh...okay? That’s good?” She side-eyes him, “Then what’s going on?”

Ritsuka lets out a deep breath, trying to release some of the tightness from his chest, “I think...I want to tell mum and dad about him—”

“Oh yikes.”

“Yikes?!” He shouts, suddenly panicked. He doesn’t know what he was thinking trying to ask Yayoi for help with this. What the fuck does she know? “Oh, fuck this—” he goes to stand up but Yayoi grabs on to his shoulder.

“Wait, wait! I’m sorry! I was just surprised! I guess I never expected you to...to want to do that?”

He sinks back down and puts his head in his hands, “Yeah, well, neither. But...ugh...I’m happy, you know? But it feels like I’m *lying*, and that’s *ruining* it.”

Yayoi stays silent long enough for Ritsuka to worriedly raise his head from his hands, and she makes direct eye contact with him. “You’re happy?”

“...yeah?”

“He makes you happy?”

He looks away from her, fighting the urge to blush, “Well...yeah? And what?”

“First of all, gross—”

“You fucking asked!”

“—*second* of all, weren’t you guys fighting not so long ago? You were a total mess, and suddenly you’re happy with him?”

“It’s not *suddenly*! It was a *complicated* situation! But then we *talked* and stuff and then...well, fucking whatever! That’s not the point!”

“No need to get *defensive*, I was just making sure. Sorry for worrying about you I guess.” She rolls her eyes at him.

“Well sorry for not being used to you worrying about me.”

“I worry about you all the time, dumbass! You’re just too dense to notice.”

Ritsuka is about to retort angrily, but he realises she’s probably right. He’s not the best at picking up people’s emotions, especially towards him. Especially when they come from a place of caring. And *especially* when it’s from anyone other than Mafuyu. Despite her usual bitchyness, Yayoi is genuinely trying to help him. That still doesn’t mean that her being worried about him isn’t extremely disconcerting.

“*Anyway*,” she sighs, “you want to tell mum and dad? About Mafuyu? Or that you’re gay?”

Ritsuka flinches at the word *gay*. With all the other things he’s been worried about, he hasn’t really had time to figure that one out yet.

“About Mafuyu. Like...I don’t even know if I’m gay. I mean I probably

am. But I haven't even really *thought* about it, I just know that I like *him*."

He's probably gay. He knows he's probably gay. He knows the thoughts he has about Mafuyu and he knows that he's *never* thought about girls that way, can't even imagine feeling the same way about a girl as he does about Mafuyu. But every time he comes to the conclusion that he probably is gay, the jeering sound of people throwing around the word as an insult rings in his ears. The sound of his own voice saying it in that way, just a few years ago. At one point, he considered being called *gay* the absolute worst thing a boy could be called. And now he actually is gay? And he's supposed to just be *okay* with that? He's supposed to be *proud*? He's proud of *Mafuyu*, proud to be dating someone so incredible, but he's not proud of *himself*.

"Okay...well, I'm not the one to help you figure that one out. But you want to tell them you're dating a boy?"

"...yeah."

"You know they'll probably ask you if you're gay then?"

"I know."

"What will you say?"

"I don't know."

"Okay..." she sighs, and tentatively places her hand on his shoulder, "Do you want me to tell them for you? You can just hide at Mafuyu's until it's over?"

He runs his hand across his face and sighs too. He needs to learn how to *talk*. He can't just avoid the bad feelings he has anymore. "No...I should tell them myself."

"Do you want me to be there?"

He stays silent for a little while, resisting the reflex to shrug off her offer. That's another thing he needs to learn how to do. Ask for help. "...yes please." He whispers.

She squeezes his shoulder and smiles lightly, "You got it little bro. When do you think you'll do it?"

"Uh...like, now? As soon as dad gets in?"

Their dad always gets in at 6pm on the dot, and it's 5 minutes to right now.

Yayoi's surprised, but tries to hide it, "Yeah?"

"I've thought about it long enough I want it done and out and over with I'm tired."

"Okay Rikka." She squeezes again, "We'll do it now then."

They sit in silence then, waiting. Ritsuka starts bouncing his leg and shoots off a quick text to Mafuyu.

I'm about to come out to my parents.

It's a bit short and over-simplified, but Ritsuka can't really think right now. He hopes Mafuyu doesn't think he's mad at him.

Mafuyu replies almost immediately:

Okay. Good luck. You can come to mine after, if you want x

I love you xx

He feels momentarily better at Mafuyu's reply, but soon enough his chest has constricted to an alarming point. He bounces his leg even more violently and brings his head down to his knees. Yayoi doesn't remove the hand from his shoulder, actually beginning to rub his back when the door clicks and his dad walks in.

His mum walks in a moment later to greet his dad, and Ritsuka doesn't raise his head fast enough for them not to notice.

"Are you okay Rikka?" his mum says, walking over to the couch.

"Y-yeah." It comes out as a squeak, so he clears his throat and tries again, "Yeah I'm fine. I actually, um, wanted to talk to you guys about...something."

They both remain standing, waiting for him to talk but Ritsuka doesn't know where to start.

"You guys should sit down." Yayoi says to them softly.

They do, but now they really look concerned. His mum reaches over to put her hand on his knee. He stops bouncing it.

“What’s wrong Ritsuka?” his dad asks.

“Um...” he starts, “I just...wanted to tell you...I’ve started, um, dating someone?”

His mum laughs and removes her hand from his knee, waving it dismissively, “Oh! Is that all? We didn’t have to sit down for that.”

“It’s about time!” his dad laughs too.

“What’s her name Rikka?”

It’s now or never. He clenches his teeth and grinds out, “Mafuyu. His name is Mafuyu.”

The silence that falls upon the room is horrific. It makes him want to throw up. He’d probably run out of the room if Yayoi didn’t have his shoulder in a vice grip. The shock on his parent’s faces is almost unbearable to look at, frozen in place. The silence stretches out unnaturally long. It’s been years, it must have been years since it started.

“His? It’s a boy?” His mum sounds so horrified it makes him flinch. His shoulders collapse as he tries to shrink in on himself. He’d do anything to be with Mafuyu right now. Mafuyu, and his mum. They made him feel like this *thing* was okay, that *he* was okay, but the look on his parents faces tell him he’s anything but.

“Yes.” He manages to reply, but only just.

“You’re gay?”

“Something like that.” He tries to shut off feeling. Go numb. Anything to get through this discussion so he can go hide from them again.

“What does *that* mean?”

“He has a boyfriend, mum. That’s what it means. It doesn’t matter if he’s gay or not.” Yayoi interjects.

“It does *matter*. If he’s gay he can’t have children. He can’t carry on the family name.”

“But Yayoi—” he tries,

“Will be taking her husbands name. So will her children.” His dad speaks for the first time.

“But if he’s not *gay*, if this is just a weird phase he’s going through, then he can still have children.” His mum carries on.

“I won’t necessarily take my husband’s name! And I won’t necessarily have children! And having a boyfriend doesn’t mean Rikka *can’t* have kids—” Yayoi exclaims, getting angry.

“That’s not really the point is it?!” Ritsuka shouts, “I’m 17! Why are we talking about me having kids?! The point is I have a *boyfriend* and I *love him* and it’s not just some *phase* I’m going through.”

The awful silence falls upon the room again. As Ritsuka processes what he’s just said, his heart rate spikes. Not only has he just told his parents about his boyfriend, he’s now also told them that he’s *in love with him*. He can’t go back on this now. Can’t pretend it’s just a teenage phase and lie and go off and marry a random woman and have random kids and have a miserable life lying to himself but making his family happy. He has to live with his truth now. Logically, he knows this was the right thing to do and that it’ll be good in the long run, but right now in his panicked state he thinks it would have been better to just lie his entire life. Anything is better than this silence. No sound other than the one of his happy nuclear family cracking down the seams. Him and his sister on one side, and his parents on the other. He puts his hands on his cheeks and squeezes, trying to keep himself together.

“Ritsuka, you really love this boy?” his dad asks, in a tone he hopes he’s not being too optimistic in believing is slightly softer than the one his mum used.

It’s too late to back out now, “I do.” He breathes out through his fingers.

His dad gets up and crouches in front of him, until Ritsuka looks up just a tiny bit from his hands, “Okay then.” His dad says. He smiles a little too.

“Wait a second—” his mum starts,

“We love our son, don’t we?” His dad cuts over her,

“But my mother will be so disappointed—”

“Grandma can go fuck herself.” Yayoi says in a monotone.

“Yayoi!”

His dad laughs, but Ritsuka stands up, “Can I go please?”

“What?” All three of his family members say pretty much in unison,

“I’ve said what I wanted to tell you, and now I don’t want to talk about it anymore. Can I leave please?”

“But dinner—” his mum tries,

“You can go Ritsuka.” His dad cuts over her again, and Ritsuka takes that as permission to run out of the front door. Yayoi follows him out, and though he’s grateful to her for being there and her support, he really doesn’t want to hear it right now.

“Yayoi, I don’t really want to talk.” He says, trying to stay calm.

“That’s fine Rikka. I was just going to offer you a lift. You’re going to Mafuyu’s right?”

He breathes out, trying to let himself relax a little, “Oh...yeah. That would be great. Thank you.”

“No worries.” She smiles at him, a little tensely, but she’s trying to be supportive.

His dad comes out the front door then, and Ritsuka tenses up again.

“Hey...” he starts, “I’m sorry about your mother. I’ll talk to her.”

“It’s okay.” It’s not okay. But he doesn’t know what else to say.

“What’s his name again? Your...boyfriend?”

“It’s Mafuyu.”

“...he’s the one in your band, right? The ginger boy?”

“Yeah.”

“I see.” There’s more silence. But this time it’s just awkward, instead of suffocating. “When will you be home?”

“Probably tomorrow.”

“Okay...”

“Okay...well...bye dad.”

Him and Yayoi begin to turn around when his dad grabs him by the shoulder and pulls him into a hug. It's quick and gruff, but he whispers in Ritsuka's ear "I'm proud of you.". Ritsuka has to stop himself from becoming misty eyed.

Ritsuka just nods, and him and Yayoi walk out of the building together. He stays looking at the ground, so he doesn't have to meet the worried glances his sister keeps shooting his way. He resolves to stay silent, but as he gets into the passenger's seat of his sister's new car he can't help remarking, "You've never offered to drive me anywhere before."

"Well, you haven't come out to our parents before."

Surprisingly, it makes him laugh a little, "True. Is that the condition?"

"The condition is severe emotional distress. I don't want you to get on the subway right now."

"I'm fine."

"I know you're not fine Rikka. But I also know you're not gonna talk to me about it. I still haven't really forgiven Mafuyu for hurting you, but even I have to admit he's the best person for you to be with right now."

Ritsuka should defend Mafuyu. He has a million points he could argue, but right now he's so drained he can't even begin to figure out where to start. So he just nods.

"I'm proud of you too, by the way." She says quickly, "You won't hear me say it again."

"Right."

"And I know you don't want to talk but you're gonna have to tell me how to get to Mafuyu's."

"Fine."

He shoots Mafuyu a quick text telling him he's coming and they drive in silence, apart from the occasional grunt from Ritsuka telling Yayoi directions. He's just focusing on his breathing, trying not to replay his mother's words in his head but unable to think of anything else. He wants Mafuyu, he wants to bury his face in his soft hair and forget about everything that has just happened. He just wants to exist in the

safe space they have between them, in that house, where no-one is horrified by things he can't change about himself.

Yayoi pulls up outside Mafuyu's apartment building and Ritsuka gets out with a muttered "Thank you.", but Yayoi gets out of the car too. He loves her, and she's been amazing today, but he can't deal with her looking at him anymore. Her eyes are so full of pity and he fucking hates it, it makes him feel itchy. He wants his boyfriend and no one else. But he takes a deep breath and turns to face her, knowing he only has to keep himself together for a little longer. To his surprise, she wraps him in a fierce hug. He's a lot taller than her now. Last time they hugged, he was probably shorter. She hugs him for just a little bit longer than a normal length of time but then suddenly lets him go, wiping her eyes.

"I'm gonna go shout at mum now. It'll all be okay. I love you dumbass." From the tone of her voice, you'd think she was angry.

"I—"

"Shut up! You'll ruin the moment. Go you idiot."

She quickly gets in the car again, slamming the door, and speeds off much faster than necessary. Ritsuka stands there shocked for a moment. Too much has fucking happened in the last hour, his brain can't keep up. He then realises where he is and runs into the building, up all the stairs, all the way to Mafuyu's front door.

The door opens before he's even finished knocking and Mafuyu pulls him in by the hand. As soon as he's inside Ritsuka starts trembling, and his ears start ringing and when Mafuyu reaches his arms around his neck he practically collapses into him. Mafuyu has to take a step back under the sudden weight, but holds him firmly. *He's here, he's safe.* So why doesn't he feel better? As soon as he walked in, he relaxed, so the tension keeping him together suddenly wasn't there anymore. He sinks his face deeper into Mafuyu's neck and registers that Mafuyu's talking to him, but can't understand what he's saying. Also, he's breathing funny. His lungs aren't working. He keeps going through the motions of breathing in, but nothing is going in. He's gasping for air that isn't there. Maybe he could breathe better if he lifted his face out of Mafuyu's hair, but he can't. Can't let go of his shirt. Can't bear to let go of him. He holds on tighter. Is he dying? Is he having a stroke? The thing he's holding onto tries to move away but he clings on. Somehow, it feels like if he lets go he really will die. This is the only thing that can save him. He finds himself being guided

to the floor by it, and he goes down easy because it means he doesn't have to let go of the thing. His breathing gets even shallower and he remembers that the *thing* is a person. But that doesn't make sense. Why would holding onto this person stop him from dying? They smell familiar and their voice is pretty, but he doesn't know who it is. It would be just his luck if he died right now. Now he really can't give his mother children. He's gonna die a virgin too. The voice gets louder, and then there's another voice. It's similar to the first voice, but different. Familiar but less familiar. His head fills with Christmas carols for some reason. There won't be Christmas carols anymore. His mum doesn't love him. His grandma won't love him.

He registers the second voice say the words 'panic attack' distantly and figures that makes sense. It doesn't particularly help though. Technically he's not dying, but the fact remains that he can't *breathe*. His hands are prised off the person who's saving him and he reaches for them again. They can't go. He doesn't know why, but it's important that they don't go. That's more important than breathing right now. He feels hands on his back and thinks they feel familiar. They haven't gone then. He then feels other hands take his own, and registers eyes in front of his. He knows those eyes, but he doesn't. After a while, what the voice is saying starts to register. It's counting. 1...2...3...4...5, again and again. He finds himself counting along, and slowly things start to register again. It's Mafuyu, the person he was clinging to. *Mafuyu*. The eyes in front of him look like Mafuyu's, but they aren't his. He slowly becomes aware that the counting, the eyes, the hands holding his, they all must be Mafuyu's mums. The hands stroking his back, his hair, must therefore be Mafuyu's. He's aware of wetness on his face. He must have started crying at some point. Kedama is yapping in another room. He also becomes aware of the air starting to enter his lungs again.

Ritsuka's breath just about goes back to normal and as soon as it does Mafuyu wraps his arms around his neck and pulls him into him.

"Mafuyu, not so tight. He's only just started breathing again." Ma-san says.

Mafuyu loosens his arms, but only slightly. Ritsuka doesn't need him to go any further. He brings his hands up and threads them through the ginger hair. *Soft*.

"I'm so sorry, I don't—" Ritsuka whispers,

"Don't say sorry. You don't need to be sorry." Mafuyu insists, speaking

right in his ear. He sounds so worried Ritsuka feels a wave of guilt regardless.

Ma-san then slings her arms around both of their shoulders and squeezes, before brushing Ritsuka's hair from his face.

"Are you okay now Ritsu-kun?"

"Y-yeah, I'm sorry, I don't—that's never happened before."

"It's okay sweetheart. Let's get you off the floor and we can talk about it."

Mafuyu gets up first and pulls him up, leading him to the sofas in the living room. They sit down together and Mafuyu guides Ritsuka's head onto his chest, one arm around his shoulder with his hand stroking his hair, the other intertwined with Ritsuka's. Ma-san lets Kedama out of what must be her bedroom and starts to make tea. Tama jumps up and tries his best to sit on both Mafuyu's and Ritsuka's lap, despite not really being large enough to manage it. Despite having only just recovered from a panic attack, Ritsuka feels a wave of calm wash over him. In such a short amount of time, he's started to feel more at home here than he does in his own house. Apart from his room, his house stopped feeling safe some time ago. Around the same time he started to realise his feelings for Mafuyu. He turns his head to better nuzzle into Mafuyu and squeezes his hand, and Mafuyu brushes his fringe off his face to drop a kiss onto his forehead. All this in full view of Ma-san. She doesn't even seem to notice. It's so *different*, so *comfortable* here.

"I love you." Mafuyu whispers, lips still on his forehead,

"I love you." Ritsuka whispers back, smiling into the fabric of Mafuyu's hoodie,

"How are you doing?"

"I've calmed down now, I'm okay. But it was...pretty rough I guess? Thank you for letting me come. It's nice here."

"You can come here any time Ritsu-kun." Ma-san says, casually squeezing his shoulder as she walks past and setting their tea down in front of them. "I take it you've probably had a very difficult evening."

"Uh...yeah, I guess."

She sits on the sofa opposite them and looks at him softly. Maternally. “Mafuyu said you came out to your parents. Did it not go well sweetheart?”

“Well...um, it could have gone better. But it could have gone worse too. It’s not like I’m disowned or anything. I’m overreacting.”

Mafuyu tugs on his hair and frowns down at him, “No you’re not. Don’t say that.”

“Mafuyu’s right, Ritsu-kun. You react how you react. It’s not for anyone to tell you whether your reaction is *correct* or not.”

“What did they say?” Mafuyu asks, looking down at him with worried eyes and stroking the hair out of his face again.

Ritsuka closes his eyes and speaks into Mafuyu’s chest, “My mum freaked out about not having grandkids to carry on the family name or something. My grandmother is gonna be disappointed. Asked if it was a weird phase I’m going through. Stuff like that.”

Both Mafuyu and his mum sigh at the same time, and Mafuyu holds him a little tighter. Ritsuka keeps talking, “I kinda ran out after that. But my dad said he loved me. And gave me a hug. So did Yayoi actually. That was a bit weird.”

“Was Yayoi there?” Mafuyu asks,

“Yeah...I talked to her before telling her I was gonna do it. She, um, gave me a lift here actually. I think she’s gone to shout at mum now.”

“Is Yayoi your sister?” Ma-san asks this time,

“Yeah.”

“They look exactly the same, it’s quite funny.” Mafuyu adds,

“Shut up you.” Ritsuka frowns at him.

“Are you two close?” Ma-san asks,

“Uh...I don’t know, I suppose? We fight a lot but...she’s there.”

“That’s good. It’s good you have her.”

Ritsuka murmurs something indistinct. She’s right, but he’s not about to admit it.

“Have you eaten, Ritsu-kun?”

“Uh...um, no, I haven’t but it’s okay—”

“Okay then,” she looks at her watch, “I’m really sorry but I need to go to work now. I’ll leave some money and you boys can order something. Take care of him Mafuyu.”

“But—”

“Thanks mum. Have a good shift.” Mafuyu interrupts before Ritsuka can object.

She gets up, kissing the top of Mafuyu’s head and ruffling Ritsuka’s hair as she walks past. “See you boys later. Stay as long as you need Ritsu-kun. Call me if you need anything.”

With that, she’s heading out the front door. Mafuyu shifts his legs and Ritsuka curls further into him, until they’re both lying down on the sofa with Ritsuka between Mafuyu’s legs, face in his neck. Kedama is knocked quite ungracefully of their laps, yapping indignantly but ignored. Mafuyu presses his cheek to the top of Ritsuka’s head and whispers, “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m okay now. Did I scare you?”

“...a little. But it’s okay. I’m really sorry about your mum.”

“It’s not your fault.”

“It is kinda my fault.”

Ritsuka raises his head to look up at him. Their faces are very close together, but now’s not the time to worry about that. “It’s not. It would have happened anyway. It just would have taken longer and be a whole lot more confusing without you.”

“...yeah?”

“Yeah,” he can feel his face start to flush. Mafuyu’s eyes are big and shiny and soft, and only a few inches from his. *Pretty*. But he keeps talking. He’s learning to keep talking. “I’m glad I met you. And I’m glad I told them.”

“You’re brave.”

“You said that last time.”

“It’s worth saying again.”

Mafuyu moves his chin just a little, but it’s enough to connect to collect their lips. Whenever this happens, as it does more and more often, Ritsuka’s heart goes insane. The blood rushes away his brain and his entire body starts to burn. But his palms don’t start to sweat anymore, and he enjoys the heat. As he’s gotten used to it, the feeling has remained all-encompassing but no longer overwhelming. It gets better, feels better, each time they do it. But as he gets more comfortable, as it carries on for longer, the urge to push harder and to do more and give more creeps in from the edges. The urge used to scare him with its intensity, and he’d pull away just to get rid of it. Mafuyu’s eyes would glimmer with something for a second whenever he did so, and Ritsuka has only just identified this look as disappointment. Mafuyu entangles his fingers in Ritsuka’s hair, the same way Ritsuka always does to him, and makes a noise in the back of his throat that vibrates through Ritsuka’s mouth and throat. All the evidence that Mafuyu *wants* him to push harder suddenly dawns on him at once. Okay, maybe he *is* a little dense. He pulls away, and Mafuyu looks disappointed again. Only for a second, not long enough for any normal person to notice. But Ritsuka has studied Mafuyu’s micro-expressions more than any normal person. He only pulled away because he has to process this information, and he can’t think when Mafuyu is kissing him. However, Ritsuka’s brain has had to deal with too much information today. It refuses to deal with any more. No more today.

“Should we order food?” He asks, voice slightly higher than normal.

He doesn’t really do a whole lot more talking. They end up ordering pizza. When they go to bed, Mafuyu turns him over and presses his body against his back. One thigh on top of his. Arm covering his. Nose pressing into his undercut, lips against his neck. Somehow, Mafuyu manages to cover him completely. It isn’t the first time they’ve fallen asleep in this position, but it’s the first time Ritsuka has needed it so badly. He feels so safe, being held like this. Everything will always be worth it if he gets to have this. Mafuyu starts to play with his fingertips, running his fingers over the calluses. The same calluses that were cracked and bleeding, only just over a month ago. They’ve healed now.

When Mafuyu opens his eyes the next morning, everything is completely black. It takes him a while to realise that it’s because his

face in still buried in Ritsuka's hair. His hand has gone a bit numb from remaining interlaced with Ritsuka's all night, so he gently pulls it away and moves it to his waist. Now that he's awake, he wants Ritsuka to be awake. In all honesty, he's still a bit worried. When they were kissing last night, he thought he could feel the last of his boyfriend's resistance crumble...except then he pulled away. Even worse, after that Ritsuka progressively started talking less and less, his eyes becoming more and more far away. He didn't let go of Mafuyu though. He nestled in closer and closer like a cat to a sunspot. When they went to bed and Mafuyu held him from behind, he felt smaller than usual. But he clutched at Mafuyu's hand. Kissed the back of it. The last thing he said before he quickly fell asleep was "I love you", whispered semi-consciously. Ritsuka had to deal with a lot yesterday, he tells himself. He was probably tired and emotionally drained. It wasn't anything that *Mafuyu* had done. But the doubt is still there, and he's still worried about him.

On the other side of his brain however, Ritsuka's neck is right there. Somehow, it's the place where he smells best. He also wants to hear Ritsuka's sleepy voice again. So, he holds Ritsuka's waist a bit firmer and plants soft kisses up and down his neck and around his ear until Ritsuka starts to make his happy sleepy noises.

"Good morning." He whispers, right in Ritsuka's ear.

"Ahh, good morning." Mafuyu can hear him smile and that in combination with the low gravel of Ritsuka's voice in the morning makes his stomach flip. Ritsuka brings his hand back and places it on Mafuyu's head. He then turns over onto his back, guiding Mafuyu's head onto his chest.

"How are you feeling?" Mafuyu asks, resting his chin on Ritsuka's chest and looking up at him,

"Uh, better now that I've slept. Yesterday was kinda...a lot." He half-chuckles,

"Yeah...you kinda stopped speaking..."

Ritsuka starts playing with Mafuyu's hair, "I know...I'm sorry, I was just kinda...burned out, I guess. Like I stopped being upset but I was just exhausted you know?"

"Yeah...of course...I was just making sure..."

Ritsuka smiles and kisses the tip of Mafuyu's nose, "Nothing to do

with you. It helped a lot, being here.”

Mafuyu takes that as an invitation to kiss him before he can move his face away and Ritsuka smiles against his lips. He kisses him back lazily and easily, comfortable and sleepy. But it stops before it really starts, and Ritsuka sighs and pulls away.

“I’m really, really sorry...but I think I need to go home.”

Mafuyu tries his best not to look let down, but he had hoped that something more would happen between them this morning. Ritsuka catches his expression and moves his hands to cup his face, “I know, I’m sorry. I’d love to stay, but...I need to finish dealing with my mum. It’ll just get worse if I avoid her.”

As much as he’s disappointed, Mafuyu understands. Ritsuka overthinks these things. It’s probably the last thing stopping him.

“Okay.” He smiles, kissing him once more on the lips but then moving off him so Ritsuka can get up.

Half an hour later and they’re standing in the hallway. Mafuyu, still in his pyjamas, with his arms around the neck of his fully-dressed boyfriend, adjusting his scarf.

“Will you be okay?” Mafuyu asks,

“Yeah, the worst is over, I think. Dad and Yayoi were probably talking to her most of last night. I feel better now too, so I’ll be okay.”

“Okay, if you’re sure. But call me later and tell me about it, okay?”

“I will do.”

“Okay.”

“Okay...”

Ritsuka smiles shyly and blushes a little, bending down to kiss Mafuyu. They both wrap their arms around each other firmly, leaning into it. It’s intense but short and they detach, resting against each other’s foreheads.

“I love you.” Ritsuka whispers,

“I love you too.”

“Let’s go on a date next time, okay?”

“Sounds good.” Mafuyu giggles. They haven’t been on a date in months.

Ritsuka gives him one more kiss before he leaves. *He’ll be okay*, Mafuyu thinks. *He’s so much braver than he used to be.*

End Notes

More Uenoyama hurt/comfort?? More Uenoyama hurt/comfort!!!
It's probably my favourite thing to write.

I have a few more fics planned for this series, and if you've read all of these thank you so much! I love my boys and I love how they're developing here. If you haven't read all of these, please consider it. But I love you anyway.

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